

15th International Roundtable on Business Survey Frames
Washington, D.C. – October 22 – 26, 2001
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Progress Report

1. Status and update on progress of business registers

In 2001 the Eurostat Annual Inquiry on business registers covered for the first time the 13 Candidate countries, in addition to the 15 EU Member States and 3 EFTA countries. Business registers exist in all these countries, except in one Candidate country (Turkey), which is planning to have a business register available in 2004.

In addition to the fixed part of the questionnaire, two pilot questions were added in 2001, one on enterprise groups and the other on register quality. In the EU Business Register Working Group in June 2001 it was agreed to continue and to enlarge the contents of the enterprise group and quality questions.

All EU Member States and EFTA countries and 5 Candidate countries are members of the OECD and their results will be presented in the specific Eurostat paper in Session 2.

2. Issues and problems resolved during the past year

BRnet

The Eurostat business register web site was created in 2000. BRnet can be accessed from the general EU CIRCA (Communication and Information Resource Centre Administration) web site:

<http://forum.europa.eu.int/Public/irc/dsis/Home/main>

The access to BRnet is restricted to persons working with business registers. The participants of the Roundtable can self-register on the web site and ask for an access to BRnet.

After the initial problems had been solved, BRnet is now an extensive source including e.g. EU BR meeting documents and presentations, methodological discussion and detailed reports on the improvement of business register quality in Member States.

Business demography

An account of Eurostat work on this is given session 6.

Globalisation

A Eurostat internal focal point on globalisation was established in 2000 and it prepared a report for the Business Statistics Directors meeting in June 2001. The work covered several statistics (Foreign Affiliate Trade Statistics (FATS), both inward and outward, both from Balance of Payments and Structural Business Statistics viewpoint; Foreign Direct Investment and Multinational Balance of Payments reporting as well as Direct reporting and surveys; EU Innovation Survey; International Trade in Services; Intra-firm Trade and Contribution of International Groups to External Trade (CIGET); and finally the treatment and inclusion of enterprise groups in business registers.

The Business Statistics Directors agreed with the proposal to establish a Task Force with the Member States, to prepare a detailed work plan and to look at the exchange of data within the European Statistical system, especially in view of confidentiality.

Statistical units

An EU Task Force on statistical units was established in 2000 and it held four meetings before giving its report to the Business Statistics Directors meeting in June 2001 (the report is available on BRnet). The proposal to have an EU Task Force was agreed and the plan is to hold a meeting in October 2001 and two meetings in the first half of 2002, if possible, back to back with the EU Business Register Working Group and Enterprise Group Task Force meetings.

Others

Including globalisation and statistical units under this heading (Issues resolved during the past year) really means only that the initial phase in how to deal with the problem has been solved and the future work agreed. Although many problems in the other major Eurostat register projects (enterprise groups and manual of recommendations) have been solved just as well (or poorly) during the past year, they will be dealt with under the following heading.

3. Issues and problems unresolved during the past year

Enterprise groups

The work on the harmonisation and inclusion of enterprise groups in business registers has been maybe the most important single project in the Eurostat business register section during the past two years. Much has been gained and agreed during this period but the subject is very difficult and has many links to other work, the most important of these is the work on the preparation of the OECD Manual on Economic Globalisation Indicators. Thus, there is still a great deal of work to be done before the results can be presented as a Chapter on enterprise groups in the business register Manual of recommendations. The work on this chapter is currently being planned and it should be available by the end of 2002.

The documents of the Eurostat enterprise group Task Force meetings are available on BRnet.

Manual of Recommendations on BRs

The revision work concerning the first 9 chapters, some of which are seriously outdated, is ongoing as joint work between Eurostat and ONS/UK in consultation with other Member States (contributions from any other country are welcomed). The draft revised chapters are available on BRnet for commenting.

Work on chapters 10-21 is planned to be completed next year. This work is connected with work on other projects, chapter 10 with quality, chapters 11-16 with business demography, chapter 19 with statistical units and chapter 21 with enterprise groups.

4. Future plans

The most important future plan in short and medium term is to finalise the methodological work concerning the projects above (enterprise groups, manual of recommendations, etc.) and to continue monitoring the state of the art of the business registers, especially the inclusion of enterprises groups and the quality of registers, in order that in the future some key figures from the annual inquiry could be published, as there is high demand on this.